



City of Helena

GOLF ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY November 10, 2015



- ☒ Pete Aspinwall
- ☒ Dave Bauer
- ☒ Kelly Casey
- ☒ Andy Cottrell

- ☒ Christopher DeVerniero
- ☒ Arthur Pembroke
- ☒ Lynn Staley

Ex-Officio Members

- ☐ ~~Larry Kurokawa, Golf Course Superintendent~~ **excused**
- ☒ Scott Longenecker, Head Golf Pro
- ☒ Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- ☒ Jennifer Schade, Recorder

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 326

TIME: 12:00 - 1 P.M.

Visitor(s): None

1. Call to Order/Establish Quorum/Review Agenda

Vice Chair Andy Cottrell called the City of Helena Golf Advisory Board Meeting to order at 11:57 am. A quorum was present.

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2. Approval of Minutes: October 20, 2015

Scott noticed one error. **The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm (not 12:00 am).** Jennifer made note of the correction. Dave moved to approve the October 20, 2015 minutes as corrected. Lynn seconded. Motion carried.

3. Election of Officers

- Andy opened the floor for nominations. We are replacing the Chairman's position. This is a 1-year term for the chairman.
- Pete volunteered to serve as chair. With no further nominations, Andy moved to accept Pete Aspinwall as the new Chair of the Golf Advisory Board. Lynn seconded. Motion carried.
- Congratulations Pete!

4. Unfinished Business

Update on Request for Information - Amy

- Based on the direction of last month's board meeting, Amy sent out the Request for Information. She was going to send this out to the National Golf Foundation of which we are a member, but the cost was too much. She researched the internet and was able to send the RFI to 15 consultants. Amy has visited with a couple of them. She referred one gentleman from Texas to

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Scott. When she explained to the consultants our intentions, they all seem very impressed – not only with the project but also the fact that we don't get any general fund support from the city. This is not typical of a municipal golf course. Amy also stated she sat in on presentation at a conference she recently attended. There were representatives from the Idaho Falls Golf Course. Idaho Falls has three municipal courses, all of which receive funding from the city. They were extremely impressed that our golf course does not.

- Amy has given consultants the opportunity to respond by Dec 1st. She reminded everyone that this is just the request for information. She is hopeful we will be able to use their information to shape the scope of our RFP. Andy then asked if we will be placing a public notice ad in the newspaper. Amy suggested we visit about the responses from the RFI and the possibility of an ad at the December meeting.

5. New business

Proposed Cooperative Golf Survey with GMCC - Amy

- Amy was recently contacted by Steve Johnson and Derrick Hoffer of the Green Meadow Golf Course (GMCC). They have hired a consultant (J.J. Keegan from Colorado). The consultant is tasked with doing a demographic market analysis for the Helena area and has asked if we would be will to cooperate on a survey with them. They would be responsible to send the survey. The survey would include specific questions regarding each course. Amy visited with the consultant and he stated we would be able to customize our questions. Our participation would include giving this consultant access to our database. Amy met with Scott and Larry regarding this proposal last week and visited about the pros/cons. They couldn't find any pros, but did find several cons. In giving them our database, we are giving them a way to target our players. Pete agreed and added that he does not think this would benefit us. We seem to be on top of who our market is and where we are going. He doesn't want to participate and definitely does not want to share our database. Dave stated it sounds like they want help with the cost. Per Amy – this would only cost us \$500. Chris then asked what they are trying to achieve. Amy stated that she didn't get much more information than what was in the email she received (she passed the email around for members to review).
- Amy did tell the consultant and Steve and Derrick that this would have to be approved by the Golf Advisory Board.
- Andy stated that we are in the process of developing our own product for our own database. Pete added that what they want is our demographics. They are looking for a way to draw in the younger players. Kelly agreed and said that the fee structure at Green Meadows is so high that young players can't afford to golf there.
- Lynn made a motion that Bill Roberts Golf Course does not participate in a cooperative golf survey with Green Meadow Golf Course. Dave seconded. Motion carried.
- Amy will respond to Steve Johnson, Derrick Hoffer and the consultant that we are not interested in participating.

ACTION ITEM: **Amy will respond to Steve Johnson, Derrick Hoffer and the consultant that we are not interested in participating in the cooperative golf survey.**

6. Reports

Parks and Recreation Director's Report

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- The consultant Amy visited with sent her the “Golf Rounds Played Historical Weather Overview” report for our area. This report confirms what we already know - that weather plays a huge role in the impact of participation of golf in our area. We should use this report as part of our strategic planning.
- On November 2nd, we gave our first presentation to the Commission on our new 2016 fees structure. The Commission has set a public hearing date of November 23rd. Amy used a PowerPoint presentation to show what is happening at the golf course. She used many of the photos to showcase the course. She presented branding efforts to include improvements to the website, the purchase of the new lockers, the simulator, and started to introduce themes where we see revenue growth tied to restrictions (such as merchandise, concessions, simulators, etc.). Everyone seemed very impressed with our rounds figure. Kudos went to the staff and the Golf Advisory Board for all their efforts.
- While she won’t do the entire presentation at the next meeting, Amy added that she will take time to identify issues with the punch cards (transferability). Everyone really appreciated the fact that we were able to keep most fees the same.
- Scott stated that Polson punch cards do not expire, but they also don’t discount theirs. You can’t have it both ways. You can’t have discounted passes in addition to ones that don’t expire.
- Amy added that based on the same presentation given at her last conference, the representatives from Idaho Falls said we were “right on the mark”. She was able to glean some great ideas for getting people to use the golf course. Some of the ideas included:
 - At one of the courses, they are using 15 inch big cups to make play go faster and make it easier for new players.
 - “Putts and Pints” tournament
 - Superintendent Revenges Tournament (the superintendent sets the course as difficult as he wants)
 - Offering food vouchers
 - Free club rental for a day (person can come in and not have to pay for clubs – allows new players to try golf)
 - Family Fun Days
- Interesting business ideas Idaho Falls does includes:
 - Started not allowing private carts. You had to use fleet carts that were rented out.
 - Also does \$1 per round surcharge for capital projects or you can opt out of this for \$60 at the beginning of the season.
 - Have different golf rates for residents and non-residents
- Amy added that Idaho Falls does not have a golf simulator. Art asked how many courses in the state use a simulator during winter months. Scott – currently, he does not know of any; however, Missoula is getting one. Scott believes we will see more.
- Amy added that they also showed a video about “Top Golf”. Per Scott, Top Golf is a driving range/night club atmosphere – like a bowling alley for golf.
- Scott – you will see this in larger markets such as Boise or Billings. It is similar to bowling. You rent by the hour. Every ball is chipped so when you hit the ball, it shows up on the screen and tells you how far it went and where it landed. It’s more or less a drinking game catering to the 21 – 35 age brackets.
- Dave went to a Top Golf in Scottsdale. It was three stories high. There was food, music, and you hit into 5 round targets. You can go to www.topgolf.com to learn more about Top Golf.

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Golf Superintendent Report

- Scott announced that we closed down the greens yesterday and we are putting out the temporary flags in front of the greens. Next week, we will begin putting rental carts in the cart barn. Our final number of rounds played was 44,447. This is the highest number of rounds since 2007. We were up 2000 rounds by March and consistently held that number for the rest of the season. Dave asked where we rank state-wide. Scott is unsure of our ranking, but believes we rank way up at the top 3 for the state of Montana. Flathead area is not as high.
- The staff has finished assembly of the new lockers and will begin installation on Friday. They are 18" wide, 15" deep, come in bays of 3, and each one is 6' tall. Lynn asked how many we will have all together. Scott – we currently have 80 so this will bring us up to around 90.
- The simulator will be up and running by Friday. We need to get with Art so we can get the simulator connected to internet and because we have a new computer, we will need to get it configured. If this all goes well, we will begin booking times on Monday.
- Dave – are we doing anything in the locker area to enhance it – particularly, something with the carpet on the floor? Scott – we are looking at carpet.
- Lynn asked what our slowest day is. Per Scott – Sunday and Thursdays seem to be the slowest days. However, Sunday evening (after 4:00 pm) is popular because that is family night. Mondays and Fridays are the busiest days.
- Our range revenue was \$91,548 which is over \$6,600 from last year.
- Pete asked if we will be replacing anymore mats on the range. Larry will need to answer that.
- Financials – as you can see, this is the first year we tracked \$200,000 on merchandise. We are working on purchasing more left handed merchandise.
- Scott also announced that we sold a new bench and scorecard ad for next year with First Interstate Bank. We are excited to partner with them.

Golf Professional Report

Men's League Report

- None

Ladies League Report

- Lynn stated she was very impressed with women's merchandise!
- Pete added that he thought the pro-shop looked great all summer long.

Other

- Lynn asked if Edean Anderson Ihlanfeldt ever sent in a donation for the course entrance sign. Scott stated she donated \$1,000. Lynn also asked about the pictures taken at the entrance. Amy said she will get copies of the pictures and send a thank you to Edean for her donation.
- Amy asked committee members to think of items they would like to see on the agenda.
 - We will soon have RFI replies that will need to be discussed.
 - Findings from the ADA report
 - Dave would like to begin discussion on the improvements/landscaping at the course. Scott stated that he, Larry, and Amy visited and has a list of beautification projects that we can revisit.

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- Pete would like to discuss the existing pro-shop building – is it designed so it can be added on to? Will we be putting money into the old clubhouse? Scott stated he has drawings and invited Pete to stop by.
- Art mentioned that he will be unable to attend the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Amy said she will get copies of the pictures and send a thank you to Edean for her donation.

7. Public comment

8. Next meeting date – December 8, 2015

9. Future agenda items

Adjournment

With no further business, Lynn moved to adjourn the Bill Roberts Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting. Dave seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:18 pm.

ADA NOTICE

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 TTY Relay Service [1-800-253-4091](tel:1-800-253-4091) or 711
citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov
 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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